



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of  
Early Childhood

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### Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program General Policy B-04

- ☒ OEC Child Day Care Contractors
- ☒ OEC Competitive School Readiness Municipalities
- ☒ OEC Priority School Readiness Districts
- ☐ State Head Start
- ☒ Smart Start

**TO:** Mayors, Superintendents, School Readiness Council Chairs/Co-Chairs and Liaisons,  
Child Day Care Contractors

**FROM:** Harriet Feldlaufer, Director  
Early Care and Education  
Office of Early Childhood (OEC)

**SUBJECT:** Definition of Space Types, Categories of Care

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#### **SCHOOL READINESS**

The intent of the School Readiness legislation was to provide families with young children access to quality early childhood education programs. A significant piece of that legislation focused on supporting working families with children by providing them access to quality early childhood education and childcare. Legislation defines that a “year-round” program means a minimum of fifty (50) weeks per year. Although work status is not an eligibility requirement, School Readiness was formulated around the concept that programs needed to meet the needs of working families. Families may not have vacation time or the family’s employer may not have a vacation schedule that is consistent with a School Readiness program’s closure dates. School Readiness programs should be flexible and responsive to challenges that families encounter with childcare and adhere to their alternative care plan (see section on alternative care below).

The School Readiness grant funds different types of spaces in programs to meet the needs of families. These space types are defined by specific criteria and School Readiness programs should endeavor to utilize their spaces in a manner that most effectively uses their funding while serving the families that are in need of that type of care.

#### **PRIORITY SCHOOL READINESS DISTRICTS** (choice of four program types)

- **Full-Day/Full Year-Program** (referred to as Full-Day program)

Provides early care and education services for children ten (10) hours per day, five (5) days per week, for fifty (50) weeks per year. Children eligible for these programs must be consistently in need of services for a minimum of six (6) hours per day, five (5) days per week for fifty (50) weeks per year.

- **School-Day/School-Year Program** (referred to as a School-Day Program)  
Provides early care and education services for six (6) hours per day, five (5) days per week for a minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) days. Children eligible for this type of space must be consistently in need of services for a minimum of five (5) hours per day, five (5) days per week for one hundred and eighty (180) days. School-Day programs operate within the public school calendar, typically September through June.
- **Part-Day/Part-Year Program** (referred to as a Part-Day program)  
Provides early care and education services for two and a half (2 ½) hours per day, five (5) days a week for a minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) days per year. Part-Day programs generally operate within the public school calendar, typically September through June, however; Part-Day programs can operate for more than two and a half (2 ½) hours per day and more than one hundred and eighty (180) days per year.
- **Extended-Day Program** (referred to as a Wrap-Around program)  
Provides early care and education services that extend the hours, days and/or weeks of programming for children who are in an existing Part-Day/Part-Year or Part-Day/Full-Year program, not funded by the School Readiness grant, in order to provide the equivalent of Full-Day services for these children for ten (10) hours per day, five (5) days per week for fifty (50) weeks. Children eligible for these programs must be consistently in need of services from the combined Part-Day and Extended-Day programs for a minimum of six (6) hours per day, five (5) days per week for fifty (50) weeks.

#### **COMPETITIVE SCHOOL READINESS MUNICIPALITIES** (choice of 3 program types)

- **Full-Day/Full Year-Program** (referred to as a Full-Day program)  
Provides early care and education services for children ten (10) hours per day, five (5) days per week, for fifty (50) weeks per year. Children eligible for these programs must be consistently in need of services for a minimum of six (6) hours per day, five (5) days per week for fifty (50) weeks per year.
- **School-Day/School-Year Program** (referred to as a School-Day program)  
Provides early care and education services for six (6) hours per day, five (5) days per week for a minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) days. Children eligible for this type of space must be consistently in need of services for a minimum of five (5) hours per day, five (5) days per week for one hundred (180) days.
- **Part Day/Part-Year Program** (referred to as a Part-Day program)  
Provides early care and education services for two and a half (2½) hours per day, five (5) days a week for a minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) days per year.

Priority School Readiness Districts and Competitive School Readiness Municipalities must ensure that all School Readiness Programs meet the following criteria:

The following must be followed when determining the distribution of space types:

1. At least fifty (50) percent of the community spaces must meet the requirements for Full- Day/Full-Year (ten (10) hours per day, five (5) days per week, fifty (50) weeks per year). A waiver may be granted for CSR only, (see program manager).
2. The remaining spaces may be any combination of School-Day/School-Year (six (6) hours per day, five (5) days per week for one hundred and eighty (180) days), Part-Day/Part-Year, (two and a half (2 ½) hours per day, five (5) days per week, one hundred and eighty (180) days) or Extended-Day, (provides the additional hours, days and weeks to an existing program not funded by School Readiness to make it a Full-Day/Full-Year program).
3. Full-Day/Full-Year, Part-Day/Part-Year, School-Day/School-Year and Extended-Day Programs must meet all minimum requirements regarding hours, days and weeks.
4. School Readiness Councils (SRCs) must develop a policy that requires the Full-Day/Full-Year or Extended-Day programs that operate for fifty (50) weeks or close for days other than the traditional holidays to have a written Alternative Care Plan Policy. Each program's policy should be submitted to the SRC for approval in order to ensure that during the time a program is closed, the families and children in that program are supported in accessing childcare. The SRC policy should include the requirements that:
  - a. The sub-grantees will submit for prior approval, a written plan for alternate care to accommodate families' needs that includes the alternative care programs that will be used;
  - b. Parents will be informed of the Alternative Care Policy when they enroll and the available alternative care programs;
  - c. Parents will be given at least a two-week prior written notice of the closing;
  - d. Parents will sign a form for their child's file that indicates if they need the alternative care; and
  - e. Alternate arrangements of care will be reimbursed in a manner specified in the SRC policy.
5. Each program's plan for alternative care must guarantee Full-Day service for all families requesting it during a closure. Sub-grantees may develop cooperative arrangements with other early childhood programs in the community, within their own programs or provide payments to parents for weeks when care is not provided. Clear notice must be given to parents in advance, allowing sufficient time to make their own plans as needed.
6. SRCs must submit their policy to the State Department of Education, prior to implementation. SRCs may review and approve requests from sub-grantees and notify the state of approved plans. This clarification applies to requests for all closings, which may be in one or two-week blocks or individual days that total no more than two weeks per year. It does not allow for variance from the hours or days required or for less than fifty (50) weeks of Full-Day care.
7. Spaces may not be funded under School-Day/School-Year, the Part-Day and Extended-Day rate. Existing Part-Day spaces, funded by another source such as Head Start or the Board of Education, may only receive School Readiness funding as an extended day program. Such programs may not combine funding rates, as in receiving the extended rate during the school year when the core program is operating and then the Full-Day rate during vacation or summer periods.

It is the responsibility of the SRCs and the Liaisons to share this information with their sub-grantees and ensure that each program is in compliance with the nonsectarian guidelines in order for sub-grantees to receive funding as a School Readiness program.

## **CHILD DAY CARE**

Categories of child care are:

- **Full Time Infant/Toddler**--Care for children from six (6) weeks to three (3) years of age that is provided for at least thirty (30) hours per week. Care for these slots shall be made available for ten (10) hours per day for five (5) days per week.
- **Infant/Toddler Wrap-around**--Care for children from six (6) weeks to three (3) years of age that extends the hours, days and/or weeks of child care to children who are in an existing part time program in order to allow care to be provided full time. Wrap-around care provides for sufficient hours to insure the provision of care for a minimum of ten (10) hours per day for five (5) days per week.
- **Full Time Preschool**--Care for children from three (3) years of age to six (6) years of age that is provided for at least thirty (30) hours per week. Care for these slots shall be made available for ten (10) hours per day for five (5) days per week. This category of care includes children who attend half-day (1/2) kindergarten, but does not include children, regardless of age, who attend elementary school for three (3) hours or more per day. In addition, children enrolled in a child care slot funded by this agreement during the months of September, October, November or December, who will be three (3) on or before January 1, may be enrolled as a three-year-old.
- **Preschool Wrap-around**--Care for children from three (3) years of age to six (6) years of age that extends the hours, days and/or weeks of child care to children who are in an existing part time program in order to allow care to be provided full time. Wrap-around care provides for sufficient hours to insure the provision of care for a minimum of ten (10) hours per day for five (5) days per week.
- **Part-time school age**--Care for children up to twelve (12) years of age who attend elementary school for a full-day. This care extends the day beyond school hours and is provided for at least fifteen (15) hours per week when school is in session. This care must be made available for at least three (3) hours per day for five (5) days a week. Children who are five (5) and attend elementary school for three (3) or more hours per day (including full and/or extended day kindergarten) shall be included in this category.
- **Full-time school age**--Care for children up to twelve years of age who attend elementary school for a full-day. This category of care is provided for at least 30 hours per week when school is not in session. This care shall be made available for 10 hour per day for five days per week when school is not in session.

The contractor may request, in writing, a waiver of an age requirement for a child who should be, based on age, in one category of care but who, based upon the needs of the child, should be included more appropriately in another category.

## **SMART START**

The only category of care available is

- **School-Day/School-Year Program**

Provides early care and education services for six (6) hours per day, five (5) days per week for a minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) days.

**For further information concerning this GENERAL POLICY please contact:**

<b>CHILD DAY CARE</b>	<b>SCHOOL READINESS</b>	<b>STATE HEAD START and SMART START</b>
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